

J. B. FITZPATRICK.
STAGE DEVICE.
APPLICATION FILED SEPT. 1, 1911.

1,036,208.

Patented Aug. 20, 1912.

Fig. 1.

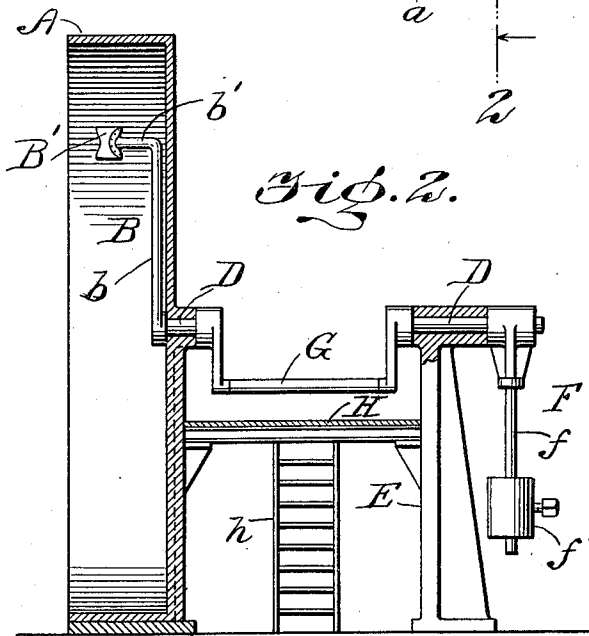
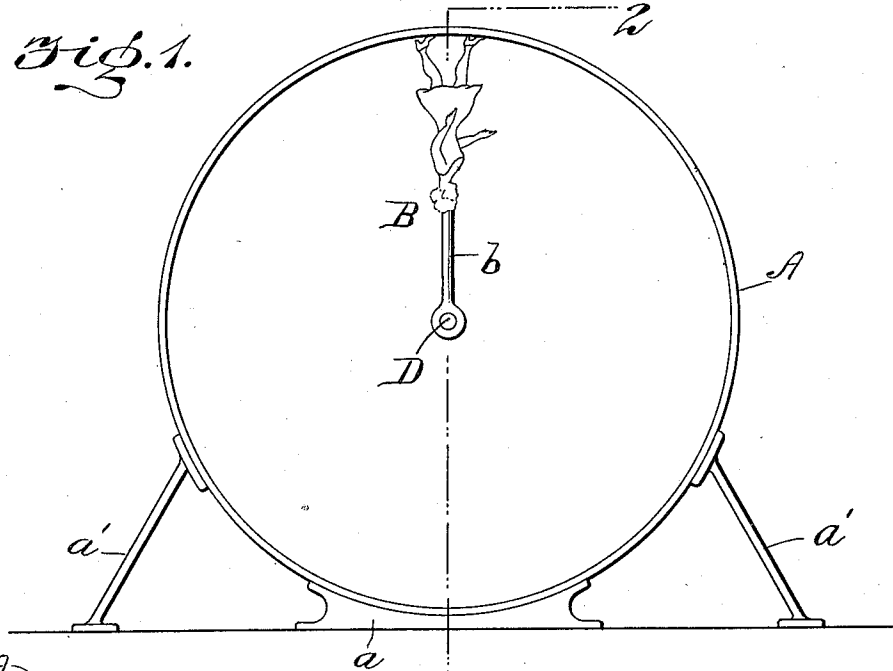
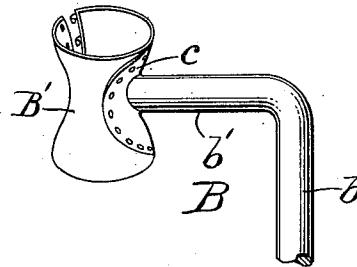


Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.



WITNESSES: a

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STAGE DEVICE.

1,036,208.

Specification of Letters Patent.

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To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JOHN B. FITZPATRICK, a citizen of the United States, residing at the city of New York, borough of Manhattan, county and State of New York, have invented a certain new and useful Stage Device, of which the following is a specification.

This invention is a theatrical illusion by the operation of which a performer is enabled to perform or accomplish the seemingly impossible feat of walking around the interior of a vertically positioned circular frame or track.

With the foregoing and other objects in view, the invention consists of a circular track or frame supported in a vertical position and within the full view of an audience, a rotatable support of one form or another positioned in operative relation to said track or frame whereby the performer is supported when in a horizontal or in an inverted position within the frame or track, and means for balancing the weight of the performer, said balancing means being invisible to the audience.

In a preferred form of the invention, the rotatable support for the performer consists of an arm and a body appliance, such as a corset, connected to said arm for permitting the performer to have a certain freedom of movement while engaged in the act of walking or otherwise moving within the circular track. The arm and body appliance are supported by a shaft extending rearwardly from the circular track, said shaft being provided with a weighted arm which balances the weight of the performer. Furthermore, the shaft is provided with a crank, or its equivalent, by which one or more invisible attendants are enabled to impart movement to the shaft and the supporting means for the performer, whereby the apparatus may be operated to support the weight of the performer and to afford assistance in the act of moving within the circular track.

In the accompanying drawings, I have illustrated one practical embodiment of the invention, but the construction shown therein is to be understood as illustrative, only, and not as defining the limits of the invention.

Figure 1 is a front elevation of my apparatus illustrating the performance of the illusion within the circular track. Fig. 2 is

a vertical section on the line 2—2 of Fig. 1, certain parts being shown in elevation. Fig. 3 is a detail view in perspective of one form of the rotatable support for a performer.

A designates a circular frame or track within which the illusion is conducted. The frame or track is intended to occupy a vertical position upon a stage, and for supporting said frame in said position suitable means are provided, herein shown as a base *a* and props *a'*, whereby the circular track is held firmly in position and is rendered portable.

B is a rotatable support for the performer. As shown, said support is embodied in a radial arm *b* and a body appliance *B'*, such as a corset. The arm and the body appliance are positioned within the circular track, and they are movable freely therein for the purpose of supporting the actor or actress, particularly when in an inverted position, as in Fig. 1, or when ascending or descending within the circular frame. The radial arm extends a suitable distance from the center of track A toward the rim thereof, and the outer end portion of said arm is shown as having a bent portion *b'*, to which is connected the body appliance *B'*. Said body appliance should be sufficiently strong to support the weight of the performer, and it is constructed somewhat like a corset in order that it may be easily applied or removed. The body appliance and the radial arm are attached by a socket connection *c*, the purpose of which is to allow a certain freedom of movement to the performer.

D is a shaft extending rearwardly from the circular frame or track, so as to be invisible to the audience. This shaft is positioned centrally with relation to the circular track, and to one end thereof is rigidly secured the radial supporting arm, whereby the rotatable support for the performer is connected rigidly to the shaft for rotation therewith. The shaft is supported in bearings of a framework E, and it is provided with a counterbalance F, the latter being shown as an arm *f* and a weight *f'*. Arm *f* is rigidly attached to the shaft, preferably at the other end from rotatable support B, and said arm *f* extends from shaft D in an opposite direction to that in which arm *b* extends from said shaft, whereby the weight operates as a counterbalance for the performer in many of the positions which the

latter assumes in conducting the performance within the track.

Means are provided for imparting rotary motion to shaft D and the support B; as shown, the shaft is provided with a crank G intermediate arms *f*, *b*. This crank is intended to be operated by one or more attendants for the purpose of turning the shaft as rapidly as the performer walks within the circular track. The attendants are stationed upon a platform H, access to which is obtained by a flight of steps *h*. The shaft, its counterbalance, the platform and the steps are all at the rear of the circular track so that these parts and the attendants are invisible to the audience.

The operation is as follows: The stage being in darkness, the performer takes position within the circular track, and the body appliance is adjusted. A light from a suitable source is thrown onto the performer, and the latter walks within the circular track, clear around it. This seemingly impossible feat is accomplished by the apparatus embodying the counterbalance and the shaft with means for applying motion to the rotatable support for the performer. Of course, the actor or actress may perform a variety of acts within the circular track, but the striking novelty is the ability to walk while upside down, or to ascend or descend, within the circular track.

In a practical form of the apparatus, it is preferred to employ a circular track with a blackened interior surface, to position a black background at the rear of the circular track, to employ a black radial arm and a black body appliance, all of which will be invisible to the audience during the conduct of the performance, the stage being darkened or but dimly illuminated. A strong light is, however, thrown upon the performer so as to render all the performance plainly visible to the audience.

Having thus fully described the invention, what I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:—

1. In an illusion apparatus, the combination of a substantially vertical circular track or frame within which a performer is adapted to walk, and rotatable means for supporting the performer within said track or frame.

2. In an illusion apparatus, the combina-

tion of a substantially vertical circular track or frame within which a performer is adapted to walk, and a rotatable means embodying a body appliance for supporting the weight of the performer.

3. In an illusion apparatus, the combination of a substantially vertical track or frame within which a performance is to be conducted, and a rotatable supporting means positioned therein and embodying a radial arm and a body appliance attached to said arm.

4. In an illusion apparatus, the combination of a substantially vertical track or frame, a rotatable support for supporting the weight of a performer within said track or frame, and a counterbalance for said rotatable support.

5. In an illusion apparatus, the combination of a substantially vertical track or frame, a rotatable support for supporting the weight of a performer within said track or frame, and means for imparting motion to said rotatable support.

6. In an illusion apparatus, the combination of a substantially vertical track or frame, a rotatable support for supporting the weight of a performer within said track or frame, a counterbalance for said rotatable support, and means for imparting motion to said rotatable support.

7. In an illusion apparatus, the combination of a substantially vertical track or frame, a shaft having means for imparting motion thereto, and a rotatable support for a performer, said support being attached to the shaft and positioned for movement within the track or frame.

8. In an illusion apparatus, the combination of a substantially vertical track or frame, a shaft having means for imparting motion thereto, a rotatable support for a performer, said support being attached to the shaft and positioned for movement within the track or frame, and a counterweight carried by the shaft to act as a counterpoise for the weight of the performer.

In testimony whereof I have signed my name to this specification in the presence of two subscribing witnesses.

JOHN B. FITZPATRICK.

Witnesses:

HAROLD VAN BERGEN,
BERT YOUNG.